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Cypress Lake Major Campus Attraction of Long-Standing

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Cypress Lake began as a low spot or brake in the farm land which was acquired at the turn of this century for the college campus. At that time the trees were already well - established and of considerable size.

For a number of years the original condition persisted. During rainy periods, stagnant water collected in the pond - like depression and even during dry periods a boggy condition persisted; a condition ideally suited to continued growth and development of the trees.

According to H. J. Chatterton, the stagnant pond was drained in 1921 by a ditch dug for that purpose. Almost immediately the trees began to show evidence of water shortage and in 1923 a tile drainage system was installed to remedy this condition by providing drainage of excess surface water and retaining a moist soil condition.

From that time until the Spring of 1942, Cypress Lake was known as Cypress Grove. The soil in the depression remained generally dry and a grass sod developed in the least shaded areas. This sod was kept mowed and all cypress knees were cut away to facilitate this operation. During the thirties, Cypress Grove was the scene of open air college activities.

Storm Sewer

In the late thirties a storm sewer line was laid across the grove to provide surface water drainage from the area of the Infirmary and Women's Gymnasium. This line developed leaks at the joints and served as an underground drainage system for the Grove area. Over - drainage resulted and the cypress trees soon began to show the effects of serious water shortage.

A number of us, including Dean T. J. Arceneaux, Mr. H. J. Chatterton, Mr. G. B. Claycomb and myself began to fear for the well-being of the cypress trees. We noticed increasing water deficits in hot, dry periods and frequently discussed ways of restoring more normal environmental conditions.

Suddenly in the Spring of 1942 an opportunity to do something for the cypress trees presented itself. At that time we were all concerned with protection from fire and other aerial raids by enemy forces. The college campus and the community were on the alert. Fire protection and water resources for this protection were an important consideration.

Impound Water

President Fletcher asked me to arrange for storage of a large volume of water somewhere on the campus. The immediate decision was to impound water in the Cypress Grove. The natural depression was of sufficient area and depth below adjacent land levels to provide an adequate storage capacity and at the same time provide life-giving water to the cypress trees.

Accordingly, the leak storm drain was replaced and a small levee was constructed along the Southeast Border of the area. Almost immediately heavy rains provided runoff water from surrounding areas and shallow lake was formed. The water level of the lake rose as rains continued and soon the primary purpose of the project was fulfilled and immediately the cypress almost began to show evidence of a more satisfactory environment.

In 1943 Mr. I. S. Nelson established the first irises in the lake, using seedlings originating from his first hybridizing work. In the following years additional plantings were made. In 1953 Mr. F. S. Gooch who, at that time was developing procedures for nursery production of cypress seedling trees, planted a number of selected seedling trees in an area along the South border of the lake. A small water well was drilled to supplement rainfall for maintaining a satisfactory water level.

Today Cypress Lake is a major campus attraction to students, faculty and visitors. It is one of a few, easily accessible natural stands of Louisiana swamp cypress, a beautiful tree and a very valuable timber resource which is rapidly disappearing from the Louisiana scene.

Bacteriology Department Also Does Research

By William L. Flannery,
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of the
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and
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The Department of Bacteriology at the University offers curricula in bacteriology and pre - medical technology as well as graduate training in bacteriology. It has been located for the past three years in the new Biological Science Building, and occupies approximately 15,000 square feet. This space is

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